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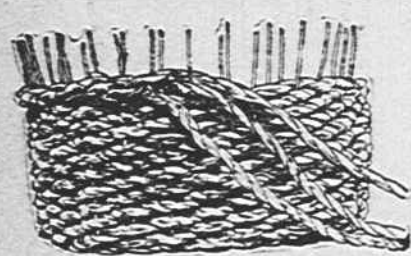
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## THE HASKIN LETTER WAR AND ART

By Frederic J. Haskin.

In a recent lecture now being published and sold for the benefit of a war relief fund, Professor Selwin Image, of the Department of Fine Arts of Oxford University, says that the future development of art in the world will be advanced by the present hostilities which have involved such tremendous sacrifice or art treasures. "War and art are not enemies," declares Professor Image. "On the contrary, peace may be the greatest enemy of art by giving it an opportunity for stagnation. The greatest art works of Greece and ancient Italy were produced in times of war."

C. R. W. Nevinson, England's greatest futurist painter, who was one of the first English artists to go to the front, has lately been invalided home after several months of service. Although serving as a soldier, Nevinson has made many sketches which are likely to develop into future masterpieces. He said upon his return: "All artists should go to the front to strengthen their art by a worship of physical and moral courage which is developed upon the battlefield. Under such influences, they will quickly free themselves from the canker of professional archaeological, antiquarian and beauty worshippers. Modern art needs not beauty or restraint, but vitality."

Many persons may disagree with so radical a statement, and dread the portrayal of gruesome battle fields which must be the art of the near future. Yet the artists who are now being brought into daily contact with war can hardly fail to gain a strength and courage from the experience which a peaceful studio life would never give them. An American art critic predicts a unification of art standards as one result of the war. He prophesies that the painting will outgrow the confines of different schools, and will combine the best elements of all, from the old masters to the cubists.

American millionaires, who have been accused of vandalism in removing masterpieces from historic settings. They will soon be regarded as benefactors to the art world, in that they have saved these treasures from destruction. Even a European critic admitted rather grudgingly: "A beautiful statue or painting is beautiful wherever placed. It is better for the world to have it owned by a wealthy Philistine who seeks only the doubtful glory of personal ownership, than to remain in its original setting at the mercy of war and plunder."

It is claimed that over ninety per cent of the artists of France are now in the service of their country. A late dispatch states that 1,800 out of 2,000 students of the Beaux in Paris are now at the front. The artist, son, the guardian of Boisson school and an artist of unusual ability, was among the first to be announced as killed. Professors Brandon, Masson, Leroux and Marek are in the army, and most of the other teachers of importance have either entered the army or turned their studios into temporary hospitals for the care of the wounded. This hospital work falls little short of the battle field as a means of bringing the artist face to face with human anguish.

The value of such an encounter has been recognized since the beginning of art. An early Greek painter is said to have stabbed a man and watched his dying agony. He claimed in defense of his act that wished to know how to "paint a groan." It is said that a later painter strapped his model to a cross and then stabbed and lacerated his body in order that he might the more naturally depict the suffering of the crucifixion.

A story is told of Turkish Sultan who once held Giovanni Bellini a prisoner, and ordered him to paint the head of John the Baptist. When the picture was completed the potentate pronounced it tame. To emphasize his criticism he drew his scimitar and cut off the head of one of his slaves, saying to the artist, "When you paint blood it must look like this."

The English painters are not behind the French in their patriotism. The last authentic list given nearly 1,500 who have enlisted in active service. These include painters and sculptors. Such names as Robert A. Bell, Phillips Conrad, Frederick Clausen, Alexander Jamison and William Nicholson are enrolled on the list, while the best known sculptors include Derwent Wood, Frederick Poole Walker and Adrian Jones. Germany has published no list of its artist-soldiers, but it is known that few are able to bear arms are left at home. The same condition prevails in Austria, while in Hungary there is much indignation over the defection of Philip Alexis Laszlo, regarded as the greatest figure and portrait artist of modern Hungary. At the beginning of the war he became a British citizen and is said to be engaged on some important war pictures in his London studio. He is regarded as a traitor in his own country, and his three large pictures have been removed from the walls of the Museum at Budapest.

The exception art collection now assembled at the San Francisco exposition may be regarded as a positive demonstration of the art of standing of this nation. Never have such valuable pictures and other treasures been loaned for exhibition purposes. Prominent among them is the German collection of modern artists which is so valuable that the exposition has insured it for the sum of \$50,000. The fact that the United States government detailed the steamer Jason, belonging to the navy, to collect and transport the paintings facilitated their collection. The Jason went to Europe laden with Christmas presents for the children of the war zone, and it was permitted to remain until the art treasures of the different countries could be assembled.

The popularity of the military painting, which had been decidedly out of favor for the last quarter of a century, is again becoming established. Few modern war pictures are as yet upon the market, but a strong demand is in evidence for reproductions of old ones. A painting by a

German artist, Ferdinand Pauwels, entitled, "Faithful Unto Death," represents Christ crowned with thorns appearing as a vision to a soldier dying upon the battlefield. It is having a heavy sale in England despite the ban upon German art.

A picture entitled, "Cease Firing," by Wilfrid Beaussepe, depicts an incident of the Franco-Prussian war. A young nun walking across the battlefield to minister to the wounded soldiers is herself struck down by a bullet. "For love of the Fatherland," by G. Graf, painted in 1842, portrays an incident now being frequently repeated in the European war zone. A beautiful young woman with a shorn head looks wistfully at the pile of beautiful hair which has just been cut. It is claimed that this picture has created much sentiment in the minds of women in favor of sacrificing their tresses in the present struggle. One of the masterpieces of Detaille, the most celebrated of the French military painters of the last generation, is owned by John Wanamaker, of Philadelphia, and has been publicly exhibited for years. Its reproduction is now under consideration. It portrays a battle ground strewn with dead dying men, and the ruins of the great conquerors of the world from Alexander the Great to Napoleon in the foreground, indicating that they had risen to power only by the sacrifice of countless human lives.

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